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THE
GLADIATORS:

AN

HEROIC EPISTLE,

ADDRESSED TO THE

BRAVOES OF ADMINISTRATION.

ILLE CRUCEM PRETIUM SCALERIS TULIT, HIC DIADEMA.



L O N D O N :

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THE
GLADIATORS.

THE gloom of sorrow clouds Britannia's brow,
To see her favorite isle reduc'd so low,
Her treasures plunder'd by a greedy band
Swarming from Caledonia's barren land,
To curse this wretched state with heavier woe
Than Israel show'r'd on the devoted foe.
She mourns the British pendant in disgrace,
Her patriot generals driven from their place,
While (if such virtue need increase of fame)
Dismission adds new lustre to their name :

Others

Others succeed them, of inferior note —
 Their only merit is a ready vote,
 And conscience wavering at the favorite's nod,
 To peace or war, to Satan or to God.

Though England's star more dimly seems to shine,
 Her commerce languishes, her arts decline,
 Her navies fly (those bulwarks of the state,
 When PITT and GLORY sway'd Europa's fate)
 A M-lgr-ve, P-nt-n, P-ll-f-r, or G-ge,
 Will swear it glorious as th' Augustan age.
 Can such things speak? no matter--if they know
 The real difference 'twixt an *Aye* and *No*.
 Contract or pension want of sense supplies,
 Makes Wh-tw--th eloquent and O-sl-w wife.

Not so the bard, whose patriotic muse,
 Though poor, disdains the venal scribbler's views,
 Dares to be true, nor courts the *princely* fate
 Of poet T-ck-ll, and of parson B-te.

May

May shame eternal brand the fulsome line,
 That pays base incense at a minion's shrine,
 Flatters the vices of the titled knave,
 Calls M--nsf--ld equitable, G--m--ne brave,
 S--dw--h religious, L--ghb-----h firm and true,
 And paints th' heroic virtues of Sir H-gh.
 Such be thy favorite theme, immortal bard,
 In softest strains to sing for sure reward,
 Harmonious T-ck-lh, may thy courtly vein
 Please by the polish of politer strain,
 So smooth, so harmless, that great G----E may fear
 No truths unwelcome to his royal ear ;
 Nor may th' indignant laurel blush to grow
 In *laureat* wreaths, hereafter, round thy brow ;
 While I more boldly soar where Freedom leads,
 And scorn to flatter, when my country bleeds.

Britons, awake! be virtuous, and be wise ;
 Let fiction's veil no more the truth disguise :

B

Consult,

Consult, inspect, and every where you'll see
 Mistakes, disunion, ruin, misery:
 Observe the system of the present r--gn,
 Corruption triumphs with the lordly Th-ne;
 Gaunt tyranny exerts her iron sway,
 And colonies revolting fall away;
 Dare to be free, embrace a glorious grave,
 Or claim that right which bounteous Nature gave.
 Confederate nations thunder from afar,
 And home-bred Discord frowns intestine war.
 Ceres no more her usual blessings yields,
 Her yellow harvest mildews in the fields,
 The peasant starves—In vain the landlords cry
 For rent—for what can Poverty supply?
 To vast excess the annual taxes grow,
 Fill up this mournful aggregate of woe;
 And form a contrast to those glorious days,
 (Eternal object of the poet's praise!)
 When glory, wealth, and Liberty divine
 Reign'd with the Second of the Brunswick line.

Members,

Members, like magpies, now are taught by rote,
 And gold decides the prostituted vote :
 But should some patriot orator arise,
 Whose soul, like Fox's, scorns the abject prize,
 Scorns each illustrious ensign of disgrace,
 Worn by right honorable rogues in place,
 The Junto, angry that their baffled art
 For once has found an uncorrupted heart,
 Try other means, more certain to succeed,
 And him they cannot purchase, doom to bleed.
 Each crime, however heinous, has its fee,
 From murder down to simple perjury :
 Give the poor Scot his stipulated pay,
 He'll take or life or character away ;
 By nature timid, but from interest bold,
 Dauntless he'd meet e'en death—if arm'd in gold.
 Great nation ! sent by heaven's revengeful hand,
 With tenfold plagues to desolate this land,
 To pilfer from us honors, fortune, birth,
 Then spurn the fools that rais'd them from the earth.

The

The senate met—important the debate—
 The doubtful question dooms Britannia's fate :
 Each pension'd tool, enrich'd with tenfold bribes,
 To Freedom's fall, with secret glee, subscribes ;
 Upon the patriot band with scorn looks down,
 Hugs the dear prize, and thinks the day his own.—
 When Fox arose—uncontroverted truth
 Impetuous rush'd, a torrent, from his mouth,
 Shew'd every art of despotism vain,
 While England's Genius heard, and liv'd again.
 The Patriot spoke—loud murmurs of applause
 Crown the great champion of his country's cause.
 The palsied minions shrunk—N--th rubb'd his eyes,
 And though he wish'd to answer, dar'd not rise ;
 G--m--ne grew pale, as when in M--nd-n's field,
 Envious, he saw the Gallic legions yield,
 And, treach'rous, hop'd (thank Heav'n the hope was
 To blast those laurels which he could not gain : ^[vain !]
 So mean is he, one scarcely can believe
 Nature would suffer such a thing to live—

But

But there, in n-v-l uniform, you see
 His very counterpart in ———.
 Could falsehood palliate a cause so weak,
 Willing he'd swear, he trembles now to speak,
 Prepar'd for all, his voice with joy he'd lend
 To sell his country, as he sold his friend.
 D——s, though early train'd in every flaw,
 To misinterpret or confound the law,
 His head for once in crimson silence bows,
 Scorns to retract, and blushes to oppose.
 E'en R-g-y's cheek glows with unwonted hue,
 And conscious owns the dismal picture true:
 Their leaders dumb, th' inferior praters gaze
 In mute expression of unwilling praise,
 In vain they wish their wonted champion here,
 In vain—for W-dd-rb-rne was made a peer.
 The House adjourns—With balmy slumbers blest,
 Virtue resigns her tranquil soul to rest;
 E'en poverty awhile forgets to weep,
 And love, fatigu'd, new vigour courts from sleep.

Hush'd is each noise, save in the lonely vale,
 Where Philomela tells her plaintive tale;
 While blushing beauty, in the neighbouring grove,
 Trembles to meet, yet wishes for her love;
 And fashion, freezing in the nuptial bed,
 Plots modish honors for a husband's head.
 Thus Nature silence kept, or seem'd to keep,
 And all but Vice and G-r-m--ne were asleep:
 Or, if awhile he courts the downy god,
 Stern conscience lashes with a scorpion rod;
 A thousand phantoms to his mind arise,
 And Fox and M-nd-n float before his eyes;
 Aghast he starts—his emissaries sends
 To call a secret council of his friends.

In silent shame the pale-fac'd Junto met,
 While tyranny rejoic'd in such a fet;
 Sworn foes to Liberty—of Northern breed,
 Or worthy to be born beyond the Tweed;

Mute

Mute was each tongue, benumb'd with Gorgon fear,
 Mute as if Fox and Eloquence were there :
 A thousand deaths, in varied forms, appall,
 And conscience makes mere cowards of them all.
 O'er one a visionary axe suspends ;
 At Freedom's shrine another suppliant bends ;
 His faithless friends desert the great man's wreck,
 And *patriot* halters bind the miscreant's neck.

G-r-m--ne at length with fault'ring accents rose ;
 In words like these his boiling rage o'erflows :
 Gods! shall the rulers of Britannia's state
 Inglorious yield, though conquer'd in debate?
 Shall a mere stripling bear the palm away
 From men in craft's bewildering wiles grown grey?
 Shall M-nsf---d's artful cunning yield to truth,
 Or hoary S-nd--ch bend to Fox's youth?
 What! though his eloquence make falsehood weak,
 Are there no means *more certain* than to speak?

Corruption

Corruption here is vain—what's left us then?
 A dagger, S——— cried; the rest, Amen!
 The thought receives unlimited applause;
 But none dare be the champion of the cause:
 Trembling they shrink—when, to assist her friends,
 Lo! Scotland's Genius in a mist descends;
 Upon a boot she rode; around her brow,
 Her *country's wreath*, encircling thistles grow;
 The tatter'd remnants of a filthy plaid,
 (Where *northern* vermin scarce would deign to tread)
 With doubtful warrants patch'd, by —— seal'd,
 The loathsome carcase of the hag conceal'd.
 With meagre famine pinch'd, with cold half dead,
 Still, though she starv'd, she scorn'd to ask for bread:
 The Council thus address'd with ghastly grin—
 A secret witness to the plot I've been,
 But where's the man who dares the glorious deed,
 Heroic dares in such a cause to bleed?
 Ha! dastards! do you pause? then leave to me
 The glory to produce this prodigy—

The

The pale fiend spoke—and stamping on the floor,
 A form tremendous, at the Council door,
 Straitway appear'd; it seem'd of Highland clan,
 Though spurious bred, half devil, and half man.
 Behold, the fury cries, the *thing* I meant;
 He'll do the deed—The spectre bows assent:
 To every vital part he knows the way—
 Again he bows assent, *and takes his pay*—
 A duel saves the hireling ———'s fame,
 And decks th' assassin with a hero's name:
 Then in a duel let the patriot die;
A duel!—the delighted Junto cry,
A duel! duel! echoed to the sky. }
 Strait was the challenge sent—The champions meet,
 And England trembles for her favorite's fate.
 The Scot, long train'd to deeds of darkest hue,
 His pistol pois'd with skill—the bullet flew—
 Britannia saw, and hastening to the field,
 Anxious, she stretch'd her adamantine shield,

D

Her

Her darling hero's precious life to save,
 And rescue Fox and Freedom from the grave.
 The plot miscarried—but in Scottish lays
 The champion's name shall live in endless praise;
 Him Highland lads shall sing, while Boreas blows,
 In Ossian elegies of metre'd prose;
 To him the matron too shall tune her reed,
 And charm the children that she cannot feed,
 Dwell on his name, more dear to Scottish pride,
 Than Moggy's fingers to her Sawney's side:—
 He sure was form'd of more than mortal earth;
 What less than deity could give him birth!
 Or northern chronicles his lineage trace
 From kings of ancient, though forgotten race?
 Was it not great, heroically great,
 A willing champion to provoke his fate,
 Alone, unaided, in the cause t' appear,
 While all his coward party shrunk through fear?
 Vain were a mother's tears, an infant's cries,
 When int'rest speaks, how vain such trivial ties!

Minds

Minds great as his such paltry claims despise,
Or name them only that their pay may rise.

Is there no virtue left beyond the Tweed?
Because he's honest, must the Patriot bleed?
Have we no laws to guard the best from ill?
We have—but ——— changes them at will:
This act enjoins with rigor, that suspends,
To serve his party, or protect his friends.
Shall England tamely see her favorite meet
Each *Gladiator* that infests the street?
Shall she her Fox's precious life expose
To the black phalangæ of his Northern foes?
Who, ——— like, disclaim their country's good,
Fight for a bribe, and live by human blood.

* Vide Trials of S-t-t-n, B--ke, &c. for the deposing of Lord Pigot.

T H E E N D.

[Entered at Stationers Hall.]

And great as his just claims of right,
Or name them only that their pay may rise.

Is there no virtue left beyond the sword?
Shall he not honestly man the Patriot blood?
Shall we no more to guard the land from ill?
We have — but — changes them as will:

This act engages with rigor, that subsidies,
To serve his party, or protect his friends.
Shall England tamely let her favorite meet

Each Quaker that insults the flag?
Shall the her Fox, or expole



To the black flag of Northern foes?
Who — like — ancient their country's good,
Fight for a ship, and live by human blood.

And thus of 2 and 11, for the doing of Lord Tigris.

THE END.

[Entered at Stationers Hall]